

IN REMEMBRANCE OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER WESLEY A. BROWN

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 8, 2012*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a truly inspirational man, Lieutenant Commander Wesley Anthony Brown, the first African American to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy. Sadly, Lt. Cmdr. Brown passed away on Tuesday, May 22, 2012. On Wednesday, June 6, 2012, a public memorial service was held in Annapolis, Maryland, where more than 250 people gathered to honor his life and legacy.

Lt. Cmdr. Brown was born on April 3, 1927 in Baltimore, Maryland to William and Rosetta Brown. During his senior year at Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., he was Cadet Corps Battalion Commander. He then went on to attend college at Howard University.

In 1945, Lt. Cmdr. Brown entered the U.S. Naval Academy as the sixth African American man admitted in its 100-year history. He would be the first to endure until the end the hazing, the torment, and the hostility bred by racial inequality. He would be the first to hold his head high and keep true to himself amid the tension. He would be the first to graduate.

Despite the publicity surrounding this great accomplishment, Lt. Cmdr. Brown remained humble throughout his life. He honored those in whose footsteps he had followed and he spoke words of encouragement to those who followed in his footsteps.

Lt. Cmdr. Brown served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars as a Navy civil engineer. He

worked on many construction projects all over the world until his retirement in 1969. He then worked as a facilities analyst at Howard University until 1988.

George Washington Carver once said, "How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong because someday in your life you will have been all of these." Lt. Cmdr. Brown went far in life because he treated people the right way—with dignity, honor and respect even when he was not treated the same way in return. He has been an inspiration to all of us and we are blessed to have had him touch our lives.

Lt. Cmdr. Wesley A. Brown accomplished many things in his life but none of this would have been possible without the enduring love and support of his loving wife, Crystal; his children, Wesley, Jr., Gary, Wiletta, and Carol; and his seven grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, my wife, Vivian, and I would like to extend our deepest sympathies to Lt. Cmdr. Brown's family during this difficult time. May they be consoled and comforted by their abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks and months ahead.

**PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT**

**HON. SILVESTRE REYES**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 8, 2012*

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Paycheck Fairness Act, a bill that strengthens the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and seeks to remedy the discrepancies in the wages of men and women in America.

In 2009, the first bill that President Obama signed into law was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Creating equal pay for women was one of the top priorities of Congress in 2009 and it was my honor to support this bill. The Lilly Ledbetter act pioneered the first steps at tackling the issue of sex-based discrimination, but our duty to American women in the workforce is not complete. Now more than ever, with women increasingly taking on the role as the breadwinner in many American households, this issue no longer affects just women; it affects entire families. For almost 50 years, we have been combating this issue. In El Paso women make up 45 percent of the labor force, with similar numbers around the country, but women earn only 77 cents on the dollar compared to men. If this gap in earnings is not reduced, everyday expenses, the ability to support their families and retirement funds will be negatively affected.

Continuing his commitment to securing equal pay for women, President Obama is pressing for us to turn this basic right, equal pay for equal effort, into a reality with the Paycheck Fairness Act. With the creation of the National Equal Pay Task Force that is cracking down on any violations of equal pay laws, the President is pressing forward with his efforts. Like President Obama, we must continue to fight for equal payment opportunities for our nation's women and in turn their families. Senate Republicans are blocking passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act which advocates for the fair treatment of almost half of our labor force. I support the Paycheck Fairness Act and its intent to increase penalties against those who participate in gender-based discrimination, and I urge Senate Republicans to stop their resistance on this issue.